



# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2007

07-10

### **CHP Enhances its Disaster Response Abilities**

#### Federal Grant Adds Specialty Vehicles to Response Fleet

(WEST SACRAMENTO) Throughout the California Highway Patrol's history, the department has responded to and provided assistance at emergency events ranging from traffic collisions to catastrophic incidents such as the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes. With the continued threat of terrorism looming and recent lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, the CHP has acquired new equipment to improve its ability to effectively respond to disasters and criminal activity in the state.

The equipment includes a fleet of high-tech mobile command vehicles, two additional aircraft and two boats. The vehicles were purchased with a \$6.4 million Homeland Security grant awarded by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security. Additionally, the purchasing of the boats and equipping of the mobile command post vehicles were achieved utilizing the federal General Services Administration's 1122 Program.

"It's not a matter of if these vehicles will be needed in California, but when. The only question is 'will we be prepared?'" stated CHP Assistant Commissioner Kevin Green.

Nine new enhanced on-scene Mobile Command Post Vehicles (MCPV) will be used to provide quick, mobile responses to disaster scenes. The vehicles will include sophisticated satellite communications equipment to coordinate rapid response efforts. One vehicle will be assigned to each of the CHP's eight field divisions plus CHP headquarters.

"These vehicles will provide our incident commanders the flexibility to coordinate our response from multiple locations within a disaster area as events unfold," said Assistant Commissioner Green.

The MCPVs will allow incident commanders to talk directly to various agencies involved in a disaster response. Direct communication between agencies on various radio frequencies will facilitate quicker response, recovery and mitigation of incidents. Also, in the event the local infrastructure is destroyed, these vehicles will allow the CHP to deliver a "virtual" CHP

command center anywhere in California. The MCPVs could, in effect, replace an area office that has been destroyed. They would be capable of providing telephone, internet, email, and satellite television service.

In addition to increased communication abilities, the MCPVs have the ability to downlink live or recorded video via microwave from CHP airplanes flying over disaster scenes, providing commanders a first-hand view of events. This will greatly assist in the deployment of resources. The vehicles also allow incident commanders to communicate even if all telephone equipment in an area is out of service.

The vehicles cost \$2,064,437 and are expected to be ready for deployment this spring following completion of tests of the communications equipment and training of personnel.

A CHP task force convened following the Hurricane Katrina deployment in fall 2005 found that effective interagency communications at disasters required the added technology.

The grant funds will also allow the CHP to purchase an additional fixed-wing airplane and a helicopter. The aircraft will be assigned to the CHP's Southern Division to provide expanded patrols of the Los Angeles infrastructure. In addition to general traffic enforcement and management duties, the aircraft will be used for increased homeland security protection in L.A.

"Aircraft are an absolutely essential tool for law enforcement and security in Greater Los Angeles because it is such a large, highly populated area," said Assistant Commissioner Green. The new aircraft join the CHP fleet of 30 aircraft statewide. They cost \$4,074,541.

The third part of the equipment purchase is two Water Response Vehicles (WRV) to be used to protect the state's infrastructure and deploy personnel. Both boats cost a total of \$289,417. They may be used for the following tasks and missions:

- Inspection of bridge structures.
- Deployment of CHP Special Operations Units.
- Protection of state assets in flooded areas.
- Marine transport of Hazardous Device Detail teams
- Support of search and rescue efforts.
- Assistance to allied agencies upon request.
- Support of narcotic, vehicle theft, and cargo theft task force operations.
- May be deployed on a full-time basis during periods of high alert.

The boats are portable and can be deployed anywhere in the state, including the rivers and water ways of the Delta when the need arises. The CHP will coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard and local police and sheriff departments to ensure the effective use of the boats.

The WRVs will permit the continuity of government operations in time of catastrophe. The CHP has a statutory obligation to protect the constitutional officers, including the governor. The boats can be used to rescue, relocate or transport these senior government officials.

"The use of modern communications equipment, aircraft and boats will provide an effective way for us to stretch our staffing to more adequately fulfill our homeland security and traffic safety missions," said Assistant Commissioner Green.

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